



## Chief enforcer of U.S. gun laws fears Americans may become numb to violence with each mass shooting

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER LEWISTON, Maine (AP) —

The head of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives says he fears that a drumbeat of mass shootings and other gun violence across the United States could make Americans numb to the bloodshed, fostering apathy to finding solutions rather than galvanizing communities to act.

Director Steve Dettelbach's comments to The Associated Press came after he met this past week with family members of some of the 18 people killed in October at a bowling alley and a bar in Lewiston, Maine by a U.S. Army reservist who later took his own life.

He said people must not accept that gun violence is a prevalent part of American life.

"It seems to me that things that we used to sort of

consider memorable, life-altering, shocking events that you might think about and talk about for months or years to come now are happening with seeming frequency that makes it so that we sort of think, "That's just the one that happened this week," he said. "If we come to sort of accept that, that's a huge hurdle in addressing the problem."

Dettelbach, whose agency is responsible for enforcing the nation's gun laws, met for nearly two hours at Central Maine Community College with relatives of those killed and survivors of the Lewiston shooting. An AP reporter also attended, along other with law enforcement officials.

Some expressed frustration about missed red flags and questioned why the gunman was able to get the weapon he used. Dettelbach told his audience



Megan Vozzella, who is deaf, signs while describing future concerns following a visit by Steven Dettelbach, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, with community members that were personally effected by the October 2023 mass shootings in Lewiston, Maine at Central Maine Community College, Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, in Auburn, Maine.

Associated Press

that they can be a powerful catalyst for change.

Continued on next page

**LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK** PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

<b>SUNDAY:</b> MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>MONDAY:</b> ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>TUESDAY:</b> JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>WEDNESDAY:</b> EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm	<b>THURSDAY:</b> MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	<b>FRIDAY:</b> RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 - 9:00pm	<b>SATURDAY:</b> EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm
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**Continued from Front**

"I'm sorry that we have to be in a place where we have to have these horrible tragedies happen for people to pay attention, but they have to pay attention," Dettelbach said. "I can go around and talk, but your voices are very important and powerful voices. So if you choose to use them, you should understand that it makes a difference. It really makes a difference."

Those who met with Dettelbach included members of Maine's close-knit community of deaf and hard of hearing people, which lost four people in the Oct. 25 shooting at a bowling alley and at a bar.

Megan Vozzella, whose husband, Stephen, was killed, told Dettelbach through an ASL interpreter that the shooting underscores the need for law enforcement to improve communica-



**Steven Dettelbach, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, talks with community members that were personally effected by the October 2023 mass shootings in Lewiston, Maine at Central Maine Community College, Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, in Auburn, Maine.**

**Associated Press**

fellow soldiers were worried about him because he was "gonna friggin' do something."

Dettelbach, in the AP interview, declined to comment on the specifics of Card's case, which an independent commission in Maine is investigating. But he said it is clear that the nation needs to make it harder for people "that everyone agrees should not have firearms, who the law says are not entitled to have firearms, to get them because it's too easy to get them now."

Dettelbach's conversation with victims was part of a tour in New England that also included meetings with law enforcement and others to discuss ways to tackle gun violence. Dettelbach, who has expressed support for universal background checks and banning so-called assault weapons, said he regularly meets with those affected by gun violence.

"Each one of these shootings is a tragedy that takes lives and changes other lives forever. And that's whether it makes the news or not, whether it's the suicide of a child or a drive by in the city, whether it's a massacre at a parade, a spray bullets on a subway, whether it's a man who kills his family, murders police" or a student with a rifle "shooting up their school," he said during a speech at Dartmouth College on Wednesday.

"I submit to you that it is our patriotic duty as Americans to respond, to think of these people, to have their backs, to view this tough news as a call to action." □

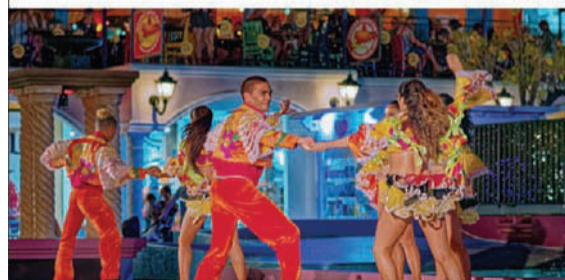
tions with members of the deaf community. She said they felt out of the loop after the shooting.

"Nothing we do at this point will bring back my husband and the other victims," Vozzella said in an interview after the meeting. "It hurts my heart to talk about this and so learning more every day about this, my only hope is that this can improve for the future."

There are questions about why neither local law enforcement nor the military intervened to take away weapons from the shooter, Robert Card, despite his deteriorating mental health. In police body cam video released to the media this month, Card told New York troopers before his hospitalization last summer that



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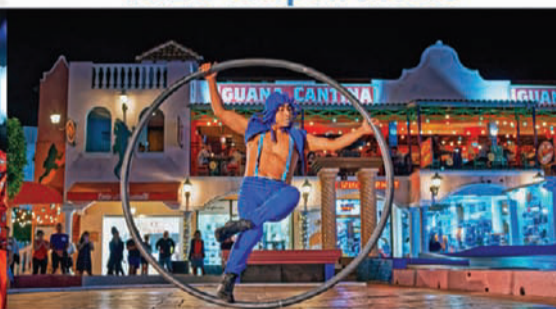
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## Vigils held nationwide for nonbinary Oklahoma teenager who died following school bathroom fight

The Associated Press

**EDMOND, Okla. (AP)** — Vigils took place across the nation on Friday and Saturday for an Oklahoma teenager who died the day after a fight in a high school bathroom in which the nonbinary student claimed to be a target of bullying.

Nex Benedict, a 16-year-old Oklahoma student who identified as nonbinary and used they/them pronouns, got into an altercation on Feb. 7 with three girls in an Owasso High School bathroom who were picking on Benedict and some friends. The girls attacked Benedict for pouring water on them, the teen told police in a video released Friday.

Benedict's mother called emergency responders to the family home the day after the fight, saying Benedict's breathing was shallow, their eyes were rolling back and their hands were curled, according to audio released by Owasso police. While a search warrant states that police were seeking evidence in a felony murder, the department has since said Benedict's



A photograph of Nex Benedict, a nonbinary teenager who died one day after a fight in a high school bathroom, is projected during a candlelight service at Point A Gallery, Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, in Oklahoma City.

death was not a result of injuries suffered in the fight, based on the preliminary results of the autopsy. Vigils for Benedict were held at locations including Boston, Minneapolis and Huntington Beach, California. Others were held or planned in several states including Washington, New

Jersey, New York and Texas. Kanan Durham, executive director of Pride at the Pier, said during the Huntington Beach event on Friday that "this single moment cannot be the only way that we honor Nex." "This is a lot for all of us," Durham said in a report by

KABC-TV. "This community has experienced grief like this so many times before." At a vigil Saturday in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the president of TahlEquality said Benedict's death was traumatic and the rights group arranged for licensed therapists to be available at the event.

"It's really hard being an LGBT community member in Oklahoma nowadays because suicide ideation and suicidal thoughts happen quite a bit," Sanj Cooper told KOKI-TV, adding that the LGBTQ+ community also was moved to speak out after Benedict's passing.

"If anything we are impassioned, the fire in our belly has been lit up again to continue to fight," Cooper said. "If anything it doesn't oppress or keep us from our voice from being heard. If anything it makes it louder." More than two dozen people gathered Friday at All Saints Episcopal Church in McAlester, Oklahoma, for a vigil organized by the McAlester Rainbow Connection. Matt Blancett, who organized the vigil with the Rainbow Connection, an LGBTQ+ group, said it was important to hold a vigil in McAlester because of the murder of Dustin Parker, a transgender man, in 2020. "It shows people that we have a community, we are here, we're not going anywhere," Blancett said. □

Associated Press

## Biden is summoning congressional leaders to the White House to talk Ukraine and government funding

By SEUNG MIN KIM

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — President Joe Biden will convene the top four congressional leaders at the White House on Tuesday to press lawmakers on passing an emergency aid package for Ukraine and Israel, as well as averting a looming government shutdown next month, according to a White House official.

The top four leaders include House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. During the meeting, the president will discuss the "urgency" of passing the aid package, which has bipartisan support, as well

as legislation to keep the federal government operating through the end of September, said the White House official, who was granted anonymity to discuss a meeting not yet publicly confirmed. The Republican-led House is under pressure to pass the \$95 billion national security package that bolsters aid for Ukraine, Israel as well as the Indo-Pacific. That legislation cleared the Senate on a 70-29 vote earlier this month, but Johnson has been resistant to putting up the aid bill for a vote in the House.

"This is one of those instances where one person can bend the course of history. Speaker Johnson, if he put this bill on the floor, would produce a strong, bipartisan majority vote in favor

of the aid to Ukraine," Jake Sullivan, the White House national security adviser, said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

Sullivan stressed that Ukrainians need weapons and ammunition to fend off Russian forces, and that in his personal conversations with the speaker, he "has indicated that he would like to get the funding for Ukraine."

Separate from the national security package, the first tranche of government funding is due to expire Friday. The rest of the federal government, including agencies such as the Pentagon, Department of Homeland Security and the State Department, expires on March 8.

In a letter to his colleagues sent Sunday, Schumer



President Joe Biden speaks in the East Room of the White House, Feb. 23, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

said there was not yet an agreement to avoid a partial shutdown of the agencies whose funding expires this week. That includes the departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and Veterans Affairs.

"While we had hoped to have legislation ready this weekend that would give ample time for members to review the text, it is clear now that House Republicans need more time to sort themselves out," Schumer wrote in the letter.

# Warm weather brings a taste of spring to central and western United States

By **MARGERY A. BECK**  
Associated Press

**OMAHA, Neb. (AP)** — A warm front swept spring-like weather across a large swath of the country Sunday in what is usually one of the coldest months of the year, sending people out of their homes to enjoy the rare winter respite but also bringing increased wildfire danger.

In Omaha, Nebraska, the temperature Sunday broke 65 degrees (18.3 degrees Celsius) on a day when the average high temperature is around the freezing mark, according to the National Weather Service.

"Omaha is having its second warmest February on record in its 154-year history of tracking weather," National Weather Service meteorologist Michaela Wood said Sunday. "And there's a chance of beating the record yet tomorrow, when we're looking at a high temperature of around 80." The sunny warmth brought Stacy Lawson, and her husband, Hugh Lawson, of Omaha, outside for a game of pickleball with



An aerial view of Gray's Bay is pictured Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, in Minnetonka, Minn.

Associated Press

friends. But they weren't the only ones.

"Outdoor courts are prime real estate when it's warm," Stacy Lawson said. "The first one we tried was already filled."

The Lawsons and their competitors, Tim and An-

drea Driscoll, had a hard time remembering the last year they were able to play outside in February.

"In Nebraska, February is both the shortest and longest month of the year," Tim Driscoll deadpanned.

While the warmer-than-

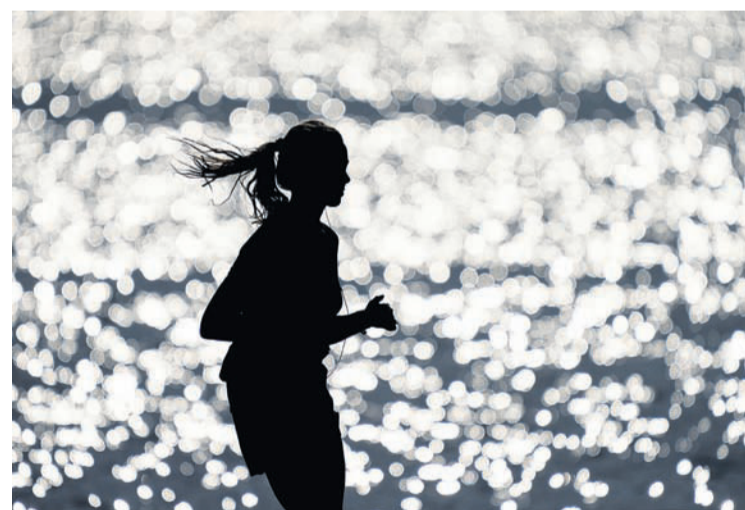
usual temperatures may have provided a break from harsh winter conditions, it didn't come without some concerns. The National Weather Service cited the warmth, along with low humidity, winds gusting more than 35 mph

(56 kph) in places, and dry winter vegetation in issuing fire danger alerts in an area stretching across parts of 11 states.

Red flag warnings and fire weather watches were issued in parts of New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, up to Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and east to Iowa, Illinois and Missouri. Nearby states, including parts of Arkansas, Minnesota and Wisconsin, were issued hazardous weather outlooks because of an increased fire danger, according to weather service maps.

A grassfire whipped up by high winds closed Interstate 25 near the Colorado-Wyoming border for about an hour Saturday before it was extinguished, according to the Wyoming Highway Patrol. The unusually early warm spell could telegraph trouble ahead, Wood said. The Climate Prediction Center says there is an elevated chance of higher-than-normal temperatures and lower-than-normal rain for the region through the end of summer. □

# Killing of nursing student out for a run underscores fears of solo female athletes



A runner makes her way along the path at Gray's Lake Park, Friday, April 14, 2023, in Des Moines, Iowa.

Associated Press

By **JANIE HAR**  
Associated Press

Carol Capps runs regularly in the forested area of the University of Georgia campus, where the body of a 22-year-old nursing student was found earlier this week after she was reported miss-

ing from a morning run. Capps, 24, said the trails around Lake Herrick always seemed safe, a place where she could get away from traffic and go into the woods for some mental clarity.

But that sense of peace

was shattered after authorities on Thursday found the body of Laken Hope Riley and arrested Athens resident Jose Antonio Ibarra, 26, on suspicion of murder. The victim and suspect did not know each other, and University of Georgia Police Chief Jeff Clark called the killing a crime of opportunity.

"The scariest thing about it is it could have been me or one of my friends," said Capps, a store associate at Athens Running Company. "It feels like a place has been taken away from me."

Riley's death has once again put the spotlight on the dangers female runners face. Previously, the 2018 death of University of Iowa student Mollie Tibbetts while out jogging prompted an outpouring from oth-

er women who shared their tales of being harassed and followed.

Crime statistics indicate that these types of attacks are rare, but they underscore the hypervigilance women must take when going out, even for a run on campus. According to a survey by athletic wear company Adidas last year, 92% of women reported feeling concerned for their safety with half afraid of being physically attacked. More than a third of women said they experienced physical or verbal harassment, including sexist comments and being followed. Running groups and women's forums have offered tips on how women can try to stay safer while exercising: Run during daylight hours or with a friend; avoid headphones; carry

pepper spray or a whistle; make sure your phone is charged; mix up running routes; inform a friend of your whereabouts and check in with them when you're done.

But Callie Rennison, a professor of criminal justice at the University of Colorado who studies violence against women, wishes there was more emphasis on teaching men not to assault women rather than telling women what they should or should not do.

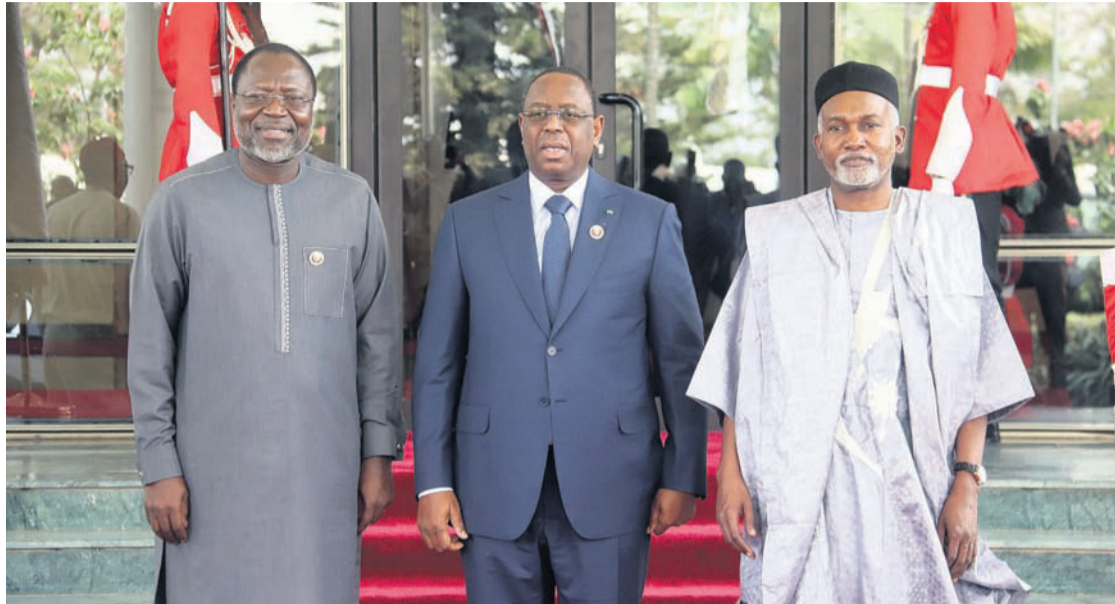
"I hope that women keep getting out there running, hiking, matriculating, climbing, working, and living their lives as they deserve," Rennison said in an email. "While I lose hope on some days for us, what is the alternative? Trying to exist quietly doesn't protect us either." □

## West Africa bloc lifts coup sanctions on Niger in a new push for dialogue to resolve tensions

**ABUJA, Nigeria (AP)** — West Africa's regional bloc known as ECOWAS said Saturday that it is lifting travel and economic sanctions imposed on Niger that were aimed at reversing last year's coup in the country in a new push for dialogue as it also renewed calls on three junta-led nations to rescind their decision to quit the regional bloc.

The sanctions will be lifted with immediate effect, the president of the ECOWAS Commission, Omar Aliou Touray, said after the bloc's meeting in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, that aimed to address existential threats facing the region as well as implore three junta-led nations that have quit the bloc to rescind their decision.

After elite soldiers toppled Niger's democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum on July 26, neighbors shut their borders with Niger and more than 70% of its electricity, supplied by Nigeria, was cut off after financial and commercial transactions with West African countries were suspended. Niger's assets in external banks were frozen and hundreds of millions of



Omar Touray, president of the ECOWAS Commission, left, Senegal's President Macky Sall, center and Nigeria Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar pose for a photo, ahead of the ECOWAS meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024.

Associated Press

dollars in aid were withheld. The sanctions, however, emboldened the junta in Niger and two other coup-hit countries of Mali and Burkina Faso, resulting in the three countries forming an alliance and announcing the unprecedented decision last month that they have quit the 15-member bloc. Analysts have called their withdrawal the bloc's biggest crisis since its formation in 1975.

The lifting of the sanctions on Niger is "on purely humanitarian grounds" to

ease the suffering caused as a result, Touray told reporters. "There are targeted (individual) sanctions as well as political sanctions that remain in force."

None of the conditions earlier announced by ECOWAS for the lifting of the sanctions have been met, including its request for Niger's deposed president to be released from custody as well as a short timeline for the junta in Niger to return power to civilians.

ECOWAS also lifted a ban on the recruitment of Ma-

lians in professional positions within ECOWAS, and resumed financial and economic sanctions with Guinea, also led by a military junta.

The bloc also invited officials of the junta-led countries to "technical and consultative meetings of ECOWAS as well as all security-related meetings," a major shift from its usual tradition of blocking coup-hit countries from major meetings.

"The authority (of ECOWAS) further urges the countries

to reconsider the decision (to quit the bloc) in view of the benefits that the ECOWAS member states and their citizens enjoy in the community," Touray said.

Saturday's summit came at a critical time when the 49-year-old bloc's future is threatened as it struggles with possible disintegration and a recent surge in coups fueled by discontent over the performance of elected governments whose citizens barely benefit from mineral resources. Nigerian President Bola Tinubu, current chairman of ECOWAS, said at the start of the summit that the bloc "must reexamine our current approach to the quest for constitutional order in our member states."

ECOWAS has emerged as West Africa's top political and economic authority, but it has struggled to resolve the region's most pressing challenge: The Sahel, the vast, arid expanse south of the Sahara Desert that stretches across several West African countries, faces growing violence from Islamic extremists and rebels, which in turn has caused soldiers to depose elected governments. □

## 31,000 Ukrainian troops killed since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion, Zelenskyy says

**KYIV, Ukraine (AP)** — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in action in the two years since Russia launched its full-scale invasion.

Zelenskyy said that the number was far lower than estimates given by Russian President Vladimir Putin's government.

"31,000 Ukrainian military personnel have been killed in this war. Not 300,000, not 150,000, not whatever Putin and his deceitful circle have been lying about. But nevertheless, each of these losses is a great sacrifice for us", Zelenskyy said at the "Ukraine. Year 2024" forum

in Kyiv.

The Ukrainian leader said that he wouldn't disclose the number of troops that were wounded or missing. He also said that "tens of thousands of civilians" had been killed in occupied areas of Ukraine, but said that no exact figures would be available until the war was over.

"We don't know how many of our civilians they killed. We don't," he said.

It's the first time that Kyiv has confirmed the number of its losses since the start of Russia's full-scale war on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russia has provided few official casualty figures. The most recent data from the

Defense Ministry, published in January 2023, pointed to just over 6,000 deaths, although reports from U.S. and U.K. officials put that number significantly higher. A U.S. intelligence report declassified in mid-December 2023 estimated that 315,000 Russian troops had been killed or wounded in Ukraine. If accurate, the figure would represent 87% of the roughly 360,000 troops Russia had before the war, according to the report.

Independent Russian news outlet Mediazona said Saturday that about 75,000 Russian men died in 2022 and 2023 fighting in the war.

A joint investigation pub-



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy answers media questions during his press conference in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday Feb. 25, 2024.

Associated Press

lished by Mediazona and Meduza, another independent Russian news site, indicates that the rate of Rus-

sia's losses in Ukraine is not slowing and that Moscow is losing about 120 men a day. □

# Mexico president's son, presidential candidate denounce leak of phone numbers, say threats received

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — The eldest son of Mexico's president and the governing party's presidential candidate said Saturday that their telephone numbers were published on social media and that they have received threats and insults. Both denounced the action.

The incident came a day after President Andrés Manuel López Obrador disclosed the phone number of a reporter for The New York Times, which published a story about a U.S. probe into claims that López took money from drug traffickers. López Obrador denied the allegations.

The first to report the release of his phone number was the president's oldest son, José Ramón López Beltrán, who wrote on the X platform that he considered the action "a kind of vengeance" and said it puts his family in danger. It wasn't immediately clear who made the number public. López Beltrán said the incident began with a letter that contained



**Mexican President Andres Manuel Obrador delivers a speech on economic figures, in Mexico City, April 12, 2022.**  
Associated Press

"threats and lies" directed at the president and his sons. He did not elaborate. On Saturday, Mexico's president told reporters that it was "embarrassing for them to act that way," referring to everyone involved. He spoke while visiting the city of Mazatlan and once

again criticized The New York Times report, saying, "We are not taking a single step back in the defense of liberty and justice." López Beltrán said it was the second time that his phone number has been published and noted he also has been harassed by

cameras and drones everywhere he has lived. López Beltrán also blamed the New York Times reporter, Natalie Kitroeff, for her phone number being made public, saying she provided the number "thinking that the president would respond to her slan-

der." Hours later, the presidential candidate of López Obrador's Morena party, Claudia Sheinbaum, as well as the party's secretary general, Citlalli Hernández, announced that their numbers also had been leaked and that they were receiving offensive calls and messages.

"It's obvious what they want to do, again their attacks are as crude as they are harmless," Sheinbaum said on her social media account and posted a screenshot of one of the messages she received. The leak of the phone data was condemned by Adrián Alcalá, head of the National Institute of Transparency, Access to Information and Protection of Personal Data, an autonomous body that guarantees access to information and the protection of personal data in Mexico. Alcalá said on his X account that the body would seek to ensure the right to the protection of personal data in Mexico. □

# Caribbean officials search for 2 people who were on yacht allegedly hijacked by 3 escaped prisoners



**The yacht "Simplicity", that officials say was hijacked by three escaped prisoners with two people aboard, is docked at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Coastguard Service Calliaqua Base, in Calliaqua, St. Vincent, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.**

Associated Press

By **DÁNICA COTO**  
Associated Press  
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Authorities in the eastern Caribbean said they were trying to locate two people believed to be U.S. citizens

who were aboard a yacht that was hijacked by three escaped prisoners from Grenada.

The Royal Grenada Police Force said in a statement released Friday that they

were working on leads "that suggest" the two occupants of the yacht might have been killed.

"This investigation is in its infancy stage," police said. The nonprofit Salty Dawg Sailing Association identified the owners as Ralph Hendry and Kathy Brandel. It said they were "veteran cruisers" and longtime members of the association, calling them "warm-hearted and capable." A relative of Hendry didn't return a message seeking comment Saturday. The association said a cruising skipper had contacted the association about a member's yacht, Simplicity, that was found "anchored and abandoned" off a beach on the island of St. Vincent.

"The good Samaritan had boarded the boat and not-

ed that the owners ... were not onboard and found evidence of apparent violence," the association said in a statement Thursday.

The association said Hendry and Brandel had sailed the yacht in last year's Caribbean Rally from Hampton, Virginia, to Antigua, and were spending the winter cruising in the eastern Caribbean.

"This is a very upsetting event and details are still unconfirmed by the authorities, but this does appear to be a tragic event," said Bob Osborn, the association's president.

"In all my years of cruising the Caribbean, I have never heard of anything like this."

Family members of those missing met with authorities in St. Vincent on Saturday, where they were seen

boarding the yacht that was hijacked. It was being guarded by officials, one of whom was wearing latex gloves.

Hendry's family issued a statement Saturday thanking police, local coast guards and all those who helped authorities gather information.

"It means so much to us that so many people cared for Ralph and Kathy as friends and fellow cruisers that they are willing to stop and help in whatever way possible," the family said.

They also asked that all those trying to conduct independent searches to "stand down."

"The only way we feel this situation could be worse would be if anyone was hurt or endangered trying to conduct searches," the family said. □

## Alto Vista chapel and its link to Aruba's origins

According to Etnia Nativa, in the 18th century most of the inhabitants of Aruba were indigenous who lived on the north coast, one of the largest communities lived in Alto Vista.

As they were very religious, they had a chief with the name of Antonio Silvester who guided them in the

Christian life and it was he who decided to build a stone chapel with a roof of corn rods, which would serve as a place of prayer. In 1750 it was blessed by Father Algamesi who came from Coro-Venezuela and appointed Domingo Antonio Silvester as the island's first prosecutor in the name of the Spanish crown and

Rome. In 1752 the prosecution passed into the hands of Antonio Silvester's son-in-law, Miguel Álvarez, who continued to guide the parishioners in their prayers.

According to the book, The History of Alto Vista by R.H. Nooyen, it is not known when Domingo Antonio Silvester came to Aruba from Venezuela. The elders believe Antonio was a Spaniard. In 1780, father Joseph Antonio de la Vegal called Bernardino Silvester, one of Antonio's sons with his wife Anna Cathalina Tromp, "neighbors and naturals of the island Aruba" and thus they became natives.

At the end of the eighteen century many inhabitants the island died as a result of the black fever epidemic and since people believed that the Alto Vista area was the most infected, they began to build their homes further south within the Noord area, so the town of Noord began to grow into a community till getting its own Church. However religious festivals continued to be celebrated at this sacred native place, with the custom of arriving in procession to Alto Vista.

Two-hundred years after the beautiful time of Alto



Vista, people can no longer see much of the town of Alto Vista from 1750. With a lot of work they found the old foundations of the Church of the Queen of the Holiest Rosary to build a new chapel on the same place. The entire surrounding area was empty and desolated, making it hard to imagine that Alto Vista was a town at all. A hundred years later, people can see the remains of around twenty houses, some made of stone and others of clay. Nowadays, only around six of these houses remain.

South of the chapel in the yard two graves can be observed, there was the cemetery which father Pablo de Algemesi blessed. It is not certain, but it is believed that the two graves belong to Antonio Silvester

and Miguel Alvares, according to Nooyen. About 50 meters near the chapel there are still the markings of an old house, where Antonio and Bernardino Silvester would have lived. About 200 meters from the chapel there is a water tank which the locals call Tanki Cacique. In the past this tank was closed. But mostly water was brought out from the Poz di Noord, a well dug in the sand.

The chapel can be viewed from basically any point in the north side, even from Paradera and Sero Plat. All the historical remains around the chapel provide us with an idea on how the old people of Alto Vista used to live. Don't miss the opportunity to visit a place of historical significance with a window to Aruba's past.



## The Aruba Tourism Authority honors a loyal visitor at Divi Dutch Village!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing an Emerald Ambassador of Aruba. This lovely gentleman was respectfully honored with a certificate acknowledging his years of

visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to

guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honoree was:

Emerald Ambassador Mr. James McLennan from New York, United States.

For more than six decades, Mr. McLennan has made Aruba his recurring destination, marking over 63 years of cherished visits to the island. His enduring loyalty and profound affection for Aruba are nothing short of remarkable, illuminating the depth of his attachment to this beautiful island.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Divi Dutch Village bestowed the certificate to the honoree, presented him with memorable gifts, and also thanked him for choosing Aruba as his best-loved vacation destination, as his home

away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by Mr. McLennan were:

- Aruba's warm weather.
- Aruba's friendly people.
- Aruba's great restaurants and bars.
- Divi's hospitable staff.
- Aruba's beautiful clean beaches.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honoree for his continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



# LOCAL



## Nurturing Aruba's Local Production in the Culinary Scene



Aruba's culinary scene has flourished in recent years, and the focus on supporting local production is important, not only to make Aruba a culinary destination but also to foster the growth of businesses and the community itself. Through strategic collabo-

ration with local farmers, producers, and chefs, the Infini restaurant works to elevate the gastronomic experience and further serve as a bridge for local production to continue thriving.

Aruba is a tapestry of flavors, and Infini proudly celebrates the island's rich heritage through its commitment to locally sourced ingredients and community partnerships. By collaborating with prominent suppliers such as Farm A Cure Fungi, Happy Ponics Foundation, Petite Greens, William Jansen Bacon, T2 Pan, Ceramics by Rani, STR Agriculture Farm Aruba, Diano Foods, and Aruba Farms, Infini not only ensures exceptional quality but also supports the local economy.

Infini's menu is a testament to the seamless integration of these local ingredients. From the earthy aroma of Farm A Cure Fungi's gourmet mushrooms to the delicate crunch of Petite Greens' microgreens, each bite tells a story of Aruba's culinary diversity. By showcasing these local flavors, Infini not only supports the island's farmers but also offers diners an authentic

taste and quality. With a focus on sustainability, Chef Urvin has sought to partner with suppliers like STR Agriculture Farm Aruba, Happy Ponics Foundation, and Aruba Farms, who prioritize eco-friendly practices such as hydroponics and organic farming. Infini ensures that its ingredients are fresh, flavorful, and environmentally responsible, with these suppliers reflecting Aruba's commitment to sustainable agricultural practices that can promote the preservation of the island's natural resources for future generations.

Suppliers like Diano Foods, Ceramics by Rani, T2 Pan, and William Jansen Bacon, whose mastery and dedication to quality highlight Aruba's cultural richness. These suppliers represent the best of local craftsmanship, offering exceptional quality products that reflect passion and commitment to excellence. From the authenticity of Rani's ceramics to the excellence in T2 Pan's production technique, the freshness and expertise in each of Diano Foods' cheeses, and the unmatched flavor of William Jansen Bacon, each supplier brings a unique

value that enriches the gastronomic experience at Infini.

"We dream of Aruba becoming a culinary destination as well as being already a tourist destination par excellence and our cultural richness. That's why we believe it's very important for all restaurants to support local suppliers by including their ingredients on our menus, in addition to communicating to our customers that they not only enjoy delicious preparations but also freshness, quality, and support for sustainable practices," says Chef Urvin Croes of Infini & Po-ké Ono Aruba.

Behind every dish at Infini lies a story of passion, dedication, and craftsmanship. Infini's commitment to local collaborations represents more than just a culinary effort; it's a celebration of Aruba's rich flavors, an interest in fostering sustainable practices in the industry. Through its innovative approach and support for local producers, Infini conveys its interest in becoming part of a broader narrative, one of growth, resilience, and a shared love for Aruba's culinary treasures.

### Asian Caribbean Impressions Menu

Spice Up Your Island Adventure

Savor the epitome of fine dining at Infini, where artistry meets cuisine in an intimate setting of only 18 seats per night. Experience the magic as our talented Chef Urvin Croes creates an unforgettable 8-course culinary dream right before your eyes, featuring our exquisite Asian Caribbean Impressions Menu. Elevate your senses and indulge in a symphony of flavors, blending the best of both worlds. Infini promises an unparalleled dining journey on Aruba, leaving you with cherished memories to savor forever.

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## Aruba to me

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Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

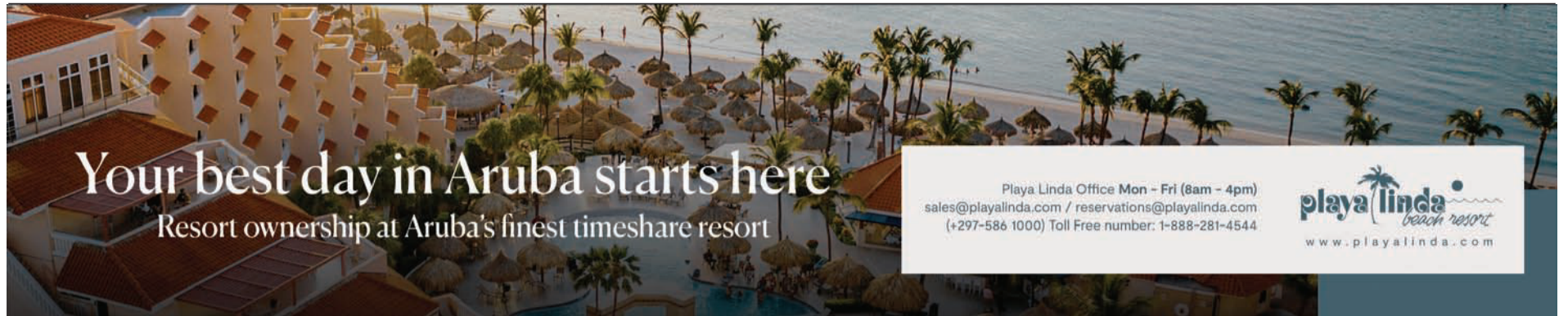
Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our lovely visitor Bonnie Connors from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, USA.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is always an adventure."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers!





## Rhythms Circus Company Aruba: putting Aruba's name on the world stage

**Rhythms Circus Company Aruba is a talented group of young people working daily to present their art in the form of acrobatics, dancing, acting and singing. After an impactful participation in one of America's biggest talent shows, they are now bringing their amazing talent to Aruba!**

In a show full of light, music, and with performances to famous musical figures like Elvis Presley, Michael Jackson and Tina Turner, the group consisting of 15 people from various countries delights the audience with their artistic prowess at the Paseo Herencia Mall, every Wednesday and Friday starting at 7pm. Each day has a different show, so you can attend both nights for the complete experience!

RCCA also offers the possibility for you and your family to enjoy dinner before the show! Starting from 6pm, you and your family

can delight from the wide-ranged menu that includes a variation of delicious main course meals complete with a delectable flan dessert as a sweet treat. Enjoy your dinner even more at a VIP table complete with comfort seating!

The group, under the leadership of directors and creators Diego Jaramillo and Yamila Hernandez are opening the doors to the ballroom to our local audience as well as our visitors so that everyone can have the privilege of experiencing this wonderful show.

Hernandez explained that the idea for this project started in 2010 when she came to work in Aruba. After being on the island for a while she decided to stay and live here, and she met Diego Jaramillo, who is currently her partner. Together they came with the idea to establish a company together with other profes-

sional artists, with the goal of living from their art.

Hernandez says that the work is hard – all of the performers are professional artists, and while the production of the show is not a challenge for them, selling the idea proved difficult since at the time, there weren't any shows of its kind on the island.

### America's Got Talent

Currently they are offering a show with music, choreography and at the end, they have a shocking acrobatics ending, one that was seen by thousands of people around the world when the group travelled to Los Angeles in the United States to represent Aruba in America's Got Talent. Hernandez said that the show was very important for them to meet the public present because people could experience this performance live and right before their eyes.



Their presentation in America's Got Talent "was incredible" and they were able to meet the jury and many other artists staying there for three months. But the exhaustion and physical toll was so great that Diego suffered an accident, and because of this, they had to cancel all future commitments.

### Reservations and tickets

To make a reservation to see this incredible display of creativity and acro-



batics, scan the QR code which will take you directly to their website for a booking. To find more information about RCCA, please visit their Instagram page @rccaruba.

## The Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa!

**The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors and an Emerald Ambassador of Aruba. These Ambassadors were respectively honored with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.**

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)  
Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors  
Mr. Larry Rich & Mrs. Wendy Lavine from Ontario, Canada.

Emerald Ambassador  
Mr. Joseph Loiselle from New Hampshire, United States. Mr. Loiselle has been coming to Aruba for 45 years.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger represent-

ing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa bestowed the certificates to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, and as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the Rich's were:

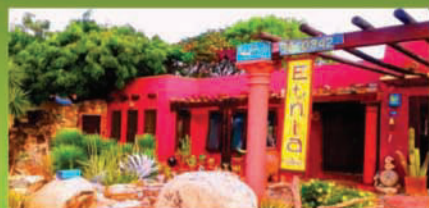
- Aruba's safety.
- "The Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa."
- Aruba's year-round sunny weather.
- Aruba's warm and friendly people who always treat them like family.

- Aruba's hospitality.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by Mr. Loiselle were:

- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's beaches.
- Aruba's safety.
- "All the memories over the years."
- "The Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa Hospitality."

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



Article by Etnia Nativa  
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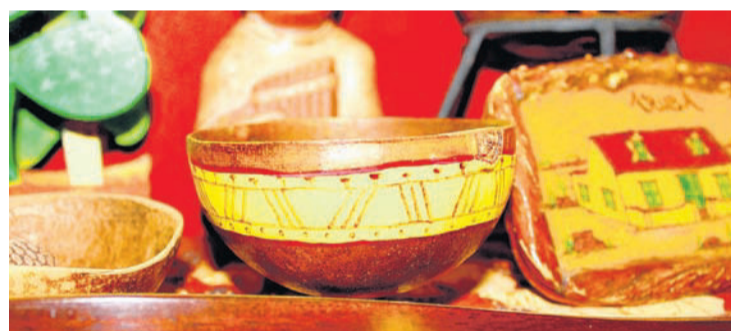


## Native tree gourds or calbas

## Episode CVI - 106

**NOORD** — Since the beginning of time people have collected and selected all kinds of objects and things for an infinite use and reasons; plants were used to build shelters, bridges and transportation, for food, medicine, color pigments, to weave clothing and ropes, for musical instruments, tools and weapons, and all sorts of unimaginable things. The gourd was used a storage container, a gourd may hold harvested fruits, nuts, and crops or as a tool to serve and transport food and liquids.

Dried gourds where a stick is inserted through as a handle and filled with seeds as a shaker are called maracas, used to keep the rhythm during festivals and magic's ceremonies. There are approximately 850 species of plants which fruits, offer well-known natural light and beautiful biodegradable containers. Some offers a great variety of colors, others had flavor in a variety of shapes and sizes and shape; Some grew on trees others grew on vines from the spherical to the bottle-shaped, some were edibles. Many



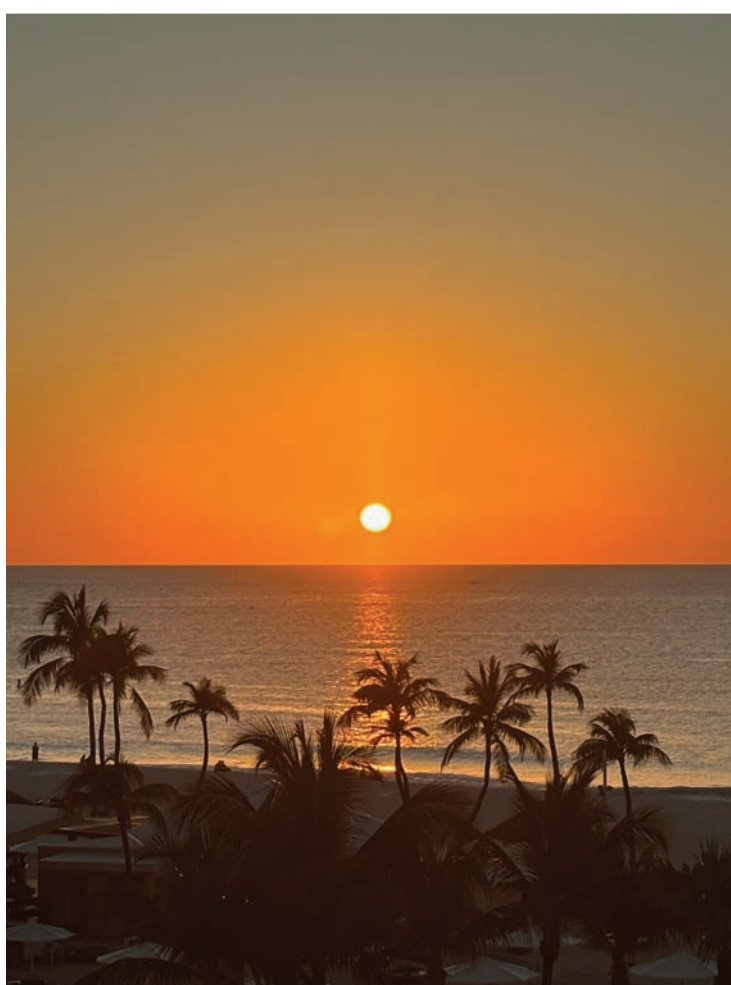
originated in Mexico and Peru. Different gourds form different species were very much sought after and appreciated in Europe for practical and decorative purposes. Like many religious and metaphysical symbols, the gourd has a dual purpose: the gourd is represented as a maraca and the womb which carries seeds of fertility, here by representing a culturally symbolic musical instrument. When a gourd is used as a water container, it may also be considered a carrier of life. Without water there is no life. Unlike a harvested crop which must be uprooted from the earth and loses its life force, water is in a continuous state of living. Long before the Europeans arrived the Guaraní drank mate, a South-American tea, in containers made of gourds where they mixed medicinal and aromatic herbs. This is how different gourds and calbas play important roles in different cultures. In the Taino creation myth it represents disbelief and the loss of faith and was used in the divination rites of the Tainos, in this tribe there is a story that tells that the Tainos in the desire to 'see' Yayael murdered warrior who they were invoking in a ritual believing that Yayael was physically inside the



calbas, for this reason, happy in their eagerness to grab him, they spilled its contents. When they realize that the contents of the gourd have turned into a fish, they give in to physical temptation and ate the fish. In this first myth, the pumpkins are represented as a tomb for dead beings and a womb for living beings.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at [etnianativa03@gmail.com](mailto:etnianativa03@gmail.com) or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.

## Aruba to me



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Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from our lovely visitor Dr. Edie Wein-

thal from New Jersey, USA.

He wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is a deep exhale of peace and tranquility the moment I land on this wonderful island. A place that has opened its heart to me and my family for 30 plus years."



## Visit the island's popular cave sites!

**(Oranjestad)—Among the endless sea of dark brown sand and cacti, there are two caves hidden in the outskirts of San Nicolas, in the north-eastern area of the island. These caves, The Quadirikiri cave and The Fontein Cave are open to visitors of the Arikok National Park, so if you ever decide to take an "off-road" tour in the park, be sure to visit these prehistoric caves...and be sure to bring a flashlight!**

### Quadirikiri Cave

Known for its two chambers accompanied by a skylight, the Quadirikiri Cave is the most popular cave among locals and tourists, as it is easy to walk through and provides great lighting for pictures.

As with all prehistoric or ancient sites, there is always a folk legend that adds to the lore and mystery of the site. The Quadirikiri cave is no different. The most well-known legend behind the cave could be considered as Aruba's first love story, as it tells the tale of the undying love between the chief's daughter and her beloved. As legend would have it, the chief disapproved of his daughter's choice of lover, as he thought him unworthy. Stubborn and filled with anger, the daughter refused to turn away her beloved.

So, the chief decided to lock her up in the Quadirikiri Cave, in hopes that she would soon calm down and turn away her lover. Her beloved, in turn, was locked away in the Tunnel of Love (Now known as the Huliba Cave).

Through the pathways underneath the Tunnel of Love running up to the Quadirikiri cave, the two love birds found each other, and refused to let each other go. Because of their stubbornness, they both died in the Quadirikiri Cave, their ascending spirits burning two holes in the ceiling of the cave. This is why the cave has two holes through which sunlight passes

through to illuminate the chamber.

Though there have been discoveries of Amerindian drawing on the wall, these have mostly been ruined by vandalism. However, the Fontein Cave further up north, provides a better glimpse in prehistoric Amerindian paintings.

### Fontein Cave

Longer than the Quadirikiri Cave, the Fontein Cave contains pathways that stretch to the limestone walls further down. Here is also where prehistoric drawings can be seen. Though this cave does not have its own legend, this was speculated to have been occupied—or at least used by prehistoric Arawak settlers on the island for rituals and other spiritual ceremonies.

### The Huliba Cave/ Tunnel of Love

The Huliba Cave, formerly known as the Tunnel of Love, was once open to the public, and was the biggest and most accessible of all three caves. This cave had five chambers, including one that is heart-shaped. This cave had narrow stairs that led to long pathways deep into the cave, with a staircase leading to the exit on the other side. In one of the chambers, there used to be the carving of the Virgin Mary, put there for the protection of the cave.

However, the Huliba Cave has been permanently closed for a few years now, as a way to preserve the bat population that lives in the cave. These Long Tongue Fruit Bats and Insect Eater Bats are very important to the ecosystem of the island. Though this cave is no longer accessible to the public, it surely is interesting to learn more about the history of these caves and the Awarak tribes that resided or utilized them.

Do note that these caves are very dark, humid, hot, and are inhabited by bats. Do wear comfortable

clothing and shoes, as the pathways in these caves

may be rough and bumpy,

flashlight!

and don't forget to bring a



Fotografo: Argenis Greaux | #BNA-DIG-GREAU-0610

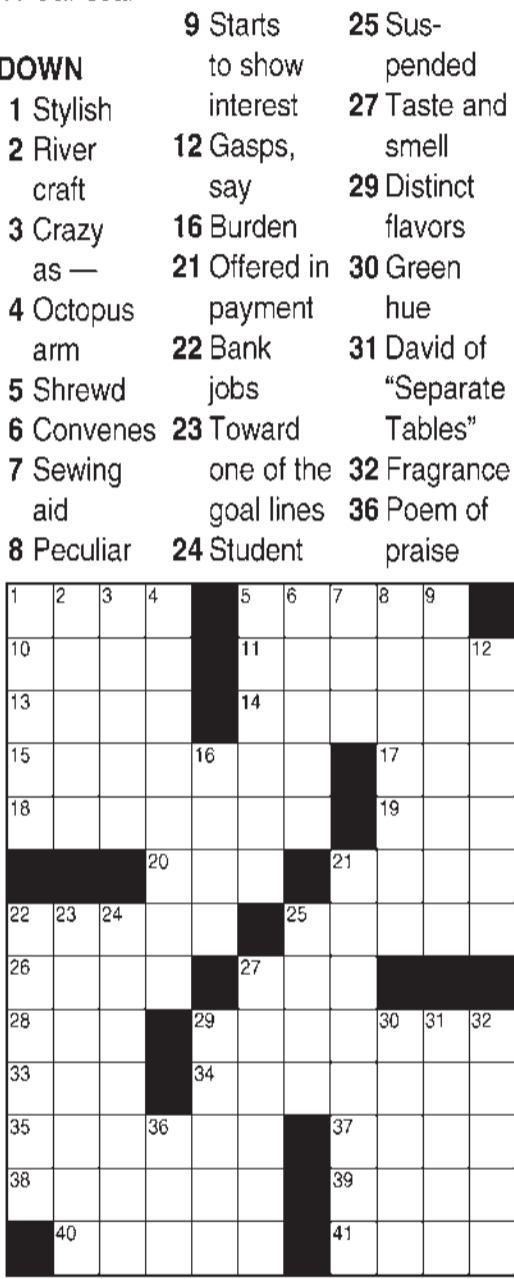
**CROSSWORD**

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS** 34 Perfectly  
 1 "Get lost!" behaved  
 5 Energize, 35 Mortises' as a partners crowd  
 37 Split  
 10 Like bulls 38 Big and rams hammer  
 11 Angler 39 Smooth with a net  
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 25 Lends a 16 Burden 29 Distinct hand as — flavors  
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 29 Muscle 8 Peculiar 24 Student connectors  
 33 Knight's 40 address 41



Saturday's answer



A XYDLB A A X R  
 is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-26

**CRYPTOQUOTE**

H O P U O A Z B F J E J F V G I J P H J L J

V M J I J Z V G E J L J F A I G R A : H V

Z O L J Z Z G W T X M V F G T I P J .

— F T R A O F R C H B P H S D

Saturday's Cryptoquote: NOBODY HAS EVER MEASURED, EVEN POETS, HOW MUCH A HEART CAN HOLD. — ZELDA FITZGERALD

# Tax-free status of movie, music and games traded online is on table as WTO nations meet in Abu Dhabi



The Netflix logo is shown in this photo from the company's website, in New York, Feb. 2, 2023.

Associated Press

By JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

**GENEVA (AP)** — Since late last century and the early days of the web, providers of digital media like Netflix and Spotify have had a free pass when it comes to international taxes on films, video games and music that are shipped across borders through the internet.

But now, a global consensus on the issue may be starting to crack.

As the World Trade Organization opens its latest biannual meeting of government ministers Monday, its longtime moratorium on duties on e-commerce products — which has been renewed almost automatically since 1998 — is coming under pressure as never before. This week in Abu Dhabi, the WTO's 164 member countries will take up a number of key issues: Subsidies that encourage overfishing. Reforms to make agricultural markets fairer and more eco-friend-

ly. And efforts to revive the Geneva-based trade body's system of resolving disputes among countries. All of those are tall orders, but the moratorium on e-commerce duties is perhaps the matter most in play.

It centers on "electronic transmissions" — music, movies, video games and the like — more than on physical goods. But the rulebook isn't clear on the entire array of products affected.

"This is so important to millions of businesses, especially small- and medium-sized businesses," WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said. "Some members believe that this should be extended and made permanent. Others believe ... there are reasons why it should not."

"That's why there's been a debate and hopefully — because it touches on lives of many people — we hope that ministers would be able to make the ap-

propriate decision," she told reporters recently.

Under WTO's rules, major decisions require consensus. The e-commerce moratorium can't just sail through automatically. Countries must actively vote in favor for the extension to take effect.

Four proposals are on the table: Two would extend the suspension of duties. Two — separately presented by South Africa and India, two countries that have been pushing their interests hard at the WTO — would not.

Proponents say the moratorium benefits consumers by helping keep costs down and promotes the wider rollout of digital services in countries both rich and poor.

Critics say it deprives debt-burdened governments in developing countries of tax revenue, though there's debate over just how much state coffers would stand to gain.

The WTO itself says that on average, the potential loss would be less than one-third of 1% of total government revenue.

The stakes are high. A WTO report published in December said the value of "digitally delivered services" exports grew by more than 8% from 2005 to 2022 — higher than goods exports (5.6%) and other-services exports (4.2%).

Growth has been uneven, though. Most developing countries don't have digital networks as extensive as those in the rich world. Those countries see less need to extend the moratorium — and might reap needed tax revenue if it ends. South Africa's proposal, which seeks to end the moratorium, calls for the creation of a fund to receive voluntary contributions to bridge the "digital divide." It also wants to require "leading platforms" to boost the promotion of "historically disadvantaged" small- and medium-sized enterprises. □

# How do whales sing? Lab experiments suggest their voice boxes have a unique feature

By **MARIA CHENG**  
Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Whales sing loud enough that their songs travel through the ocean, but knowing the mechanics behind that has been a mystery. Scientists now think they have an idea, and it's something not seen in other animals: a specialized voice box.

Experts say the discovery, while based on a study that is too tiny to be definitive, will direct future research into how whales communicate.

In a paper published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, Coen Elemans of the University of Southern Denmark and colleagues studied the voice boxes, or larynxes, from three dead, stranded whales — a humpback, minke and sei, which are all types of baleen whales.

In the laboratory, the scientists blew air through the voice boxes under controlled conditions to see what tissues might vibrate. Researchers also created computer models of the sei whale's vocalizations and matched them to recordings of similar whales taken in the wild.

Whales' ancestors were land-dwellers about 50 million years ago before moving into water. Elemans said the animals adapted their voice boxes over tens



This photo provided by Samuel Lam shows a humpback whale and her calf in Papeete, French Polynesia in September 2022. Associated Press

of millions of years to make sounds underwater.

Unlike humans and other mammals, baleen whales don't have teeth or vocal chords. Instead, in their voice boxes, they have a U-shaped tissue that allows them to breathe in massive amounts of air and a large "cushion" of fat and muscle not seen in other animal species. Whales sing by pushing the tissue against the fat and muscle cushion, Elemans said.

"This is the most comprehensive and significant study to date on how baleen whales vocalize, a long-standing mystery in the field," said Jeremy Goldbogen, an associate professor of oceans at Stanford University, who was not involved in the new research. He noted there is more to be studied "given the extraordinarily diverse acoustic repertoires" of whales.

Humpbacks, for example, are known to compose elaborate songs that travel across oceans and whale pods.

As loud as whales' songs are, modelling suggests that humpbacks and related species can't produce sounds louder than the shipping industry, Elemans said.

"They're really affected by (shipping noise) and it significantly reduces their abil-

ity to communicate," he said. "There's just no way for them to get louder."

Because some whales sing as a mating call, the shipping industry's interruption of those songs is potentially worrying, said Michael Noad, director of the Centre for Marine Science at the University of Queensland in Australia. He was not part of the Nature study. □



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WK 52 Ocean View \$65,000  
WK 7 and 14 - all views

**GOLD SEASON**

2 Bed Oceanfront \$18,000  
2 Bed Oceanside \$9,750  
2 Bed Ocean view \$9,000  
2 Bed Garden view \$7,000  
3 Bed Ocean view \$16,500

**Marriott Aruba Ocean Club PLATINUM SEASON**

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2 Bed Ocean view \$27,000  
1 Bed Ocean front \$22,000  
1 Bed Ocean View \$17,500

**GOLD SEASON**

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# Bucks beat 76ers 119-98 in Doc Rivers' return to Philadelphia

By **ANTHONY SANFILIPPO**  
Associated Press

**PHILADELPHIA (AP)** — Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 30 points, Damian Lillard added 24 and the Milwaukee Bucks beat the 76ers 119-98 on Sunday in Doc Rivers' return to Philadelphia.

Rivers was fired by Philadelphia after last season. He coached the 76ers from 2020-23, never getting past the second round of the playoffs, and Sunday was 12th game since taking over in Milwaukee.

"It was awesome," Rivers said of his return. "I had three good years here, and I'm not talking about basketball, I'm talking about life. I enjoyed my stay here. I have made friends for life. The fans were good, too. There were a couple hilarious comments. One guy told me that Larry David was looking for me to golf. I thought that was pretty funny."

Rivers was greeted by a chorus of boos from the sell-out crowd during introductions, but his team quickly took the crowd out of the game with a blistering first quarter.



**Milwaukee Bucks coach Doc Rivers, left, yells to his team during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Philadelphia 76ers, Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, in Philadelphia.**

Associated Press

Lillard scored the first seven points for the Bucks and finished with 11 points in the quarter as Milwaukee built a 14-point lead.

"I thought we were consistent," Lillard said. "We got into the paint, we were willing to make the extra pass to find the open guy and we got quality looks. To play good offense you find quality shots and have a lot

of mix. I thought that's what we did."

Antetokounmpo, who also finished with 12 rebounds and nine assists, wrapped up the first half with a flourish, hitting a driving layup and also making a full-court pass to Brook Lopez for a dunk as the horn sounded to give Milwaukee its largest lead at 21 points. Philadelphia never got closer

than 12 points in the second half.

Antetokounmpo went to the free throw line more times himself (12) than the entire 76ers team (11).

Rivers credited that to his team's defense.

"We had been putting such an emphasis on defense," Rivers said. "The last few games we've been terrific. When you have Giannis on

your team, if you can get stops and get him in transition, Giannis in transition is a problem for everybody."

Malik Beasley added 20 points and Bobby Portis Jr. had 17 as Milwaukee won its second straight game coming out of the All-Star break after going 3-7 in Rivers' first 10 games as coach.

"It all comes down to communicating," Beasley said. "Today was one of the first times we all were communicating. (Before) we were getting mixed up making sure we stay with our own guy or switch. We did a great job with that today."

Tyrese Maxey had 24 points and De'Anthony Melton added 16 for the 76ers, who have dropped eight of 12 games since losing reigning MVP Joel Embiid to a left knee injury in January.

"We have a lot of guards and a big man shortage," Philadelphia coach Nick Nurse said. "We're trying to figure some things out. But we still have to do a little bit better of a job of 'drive and kick' style basketball with this group of guys. We've got to get organized. We've got to be more organized on the offensive end."

# Eric Bieniemy expected to join UCLA as associate head coach, offensive coordinator, AP sources say



**Washington Commanders offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy watches players warm up for an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys, Nov. 23, 2023, in Arlington, Texas.**

Associated Press

By **JOE REEDY** and **ROB MAADDI**

AP Sports Writers

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Eric Bieniemy is on the verge of returning home for his next job.

The former Kansas City Chiefs and Washington Commanders offensive

coordinator is expected to become UCLA's associate head coach and offensive coordinator, two people familiar with the situation told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The people spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because details of the con-

tract are still being worked out.

Bieniemy is the first significant hire for new UCLA coach DeShaun Foster, who was hired on Feb. 12 after Chip Kelly left Westwood to become Ohio State's offensive coordinator.

Bieniemy, a two-time Super Bowl champion with the Kansas City Chiefs, spent the past season in Washington. He wasn't retained by new Commanders coach Dan Quinn, who replaced Ron Rivera.

Foster does not have head coaching or coordinator experience, so the hiring of Bieniemy gives the Bruins an experienced voice as they enter the Big Ten in 2024 and try to retain or add players via the transfer portal.

Despite his success in Kansas City, Bieniemy hasn't been able to land a heading coach job even though he has interviewed with more than half of the NFL's teams.

Bieniemy only received offers to be a running backs coach and pass game coordinator for 2024 so he chose to return to UCLA, where he spent three seasons as an assistant in various roles from 2003-05.

Bieniemy spent 10 seasons with the Chiefs working under Andy Reid and played a major role in helping Patrick Mahomes develop into one of the NFL's best players. Mahomes just led the Chiefs to their third Super Bowl title in five years and earned MVP honors for the third time.

Reid brought Bieniemy in to

speaking to the offense before the Chiefs beat Baltimore in the AFC championship game.

"It's always great to have EB in the building," Mahomes said. "Just being there, the energy that he brings, the mentality that he brings, you can feel because he has that intensity, but he loves it. He loves being there, he loves being a part of the team and being a part of that culture. Just having him back in the building was really cool; listening to him talk, his energy. I think guys had a little bit of chill bumps, like, 'Hey, EB's back here.' Obviously, he didn't get that head coaching opportunity, but I'm excited for him to continue to coach football and to continue to make his impact on the game." □

# Jen Pawol becomes the first woman to umpire a spring training game since 2007

By **MARC BERMAN**  
Associated Press

**WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP)** — It took eight years but Jen Pawol made the leap from the minors to a major league game spring training contest as umpire at the Grapefruit League opener between the Houston Astros and Washington Nationals at CACTI Park of The Palm Beaches on Saturday.

Pawol's spring training debut marked the first time since 2007 that a woman umpired a major league spring training game, last done by Ria Cortesio. With a ponytail coming out of her ballcap, Pawol was stationed at third base.

After the traditional pre-game meeting with the umpires and managers at home plate, the group posed for pictures. Nationals manager Dave Martinez shook Pawol's hand and chatted with her briefly.

Eight years ago, Pawol, a former New Jersey high school softball star who played at Hofstra, became just the seventh woman to umpire a minor league baseball game.

"I greatly appreciate everyone's enthusiasm, everyone's welcoming attitude on the field," Pawol said after the 7-4 Astros victory before 3,655 fans. "Tonight was very, very special. Both managers shared congratulations, (everyone was) welcoming, enthusiastic. The players on the field, so many said congrats and great to see you up here. A gentleman, Javier (Bracamonte, Astros bullpen coach), he ran out early in the game and said he has a daughter playing all kinds of sports. It's good to see you out here."

Across the next few weeks, Pawol, 47, will be based in Palm Beach County to work other spring training games. No woman has ever been assigned to umpire a regular season game in the majors.

On Sunday, Pawol will work behind the plate in Jupiter for the Nationals-Marlins game. She has no time-

table on when she might work a regular season contest.

With a rotation set for every three innings, Pawol switched to second base in the fourth. She then went to first base in the seventh inning, where she saw her most action. She called out two straight Astros batters off groundouts in the top of the seventh. In her closest call in the bottom of the seventh, Pawol motioned safe after Nationals' Travis Blankenhorn appeared to beat out a grounder to first that was bobbled.

Pawol's most noteworthy maneuver occurred at the start of the bottom of the fourth when she stopped play after noticing the As-



Umpire Jen Pawol, second from left, stands with fellow umpires Edwin Jimenez (75), Ryan Additon and Lance Barksdale, right, just prior to the start of a spring training baseball game between the Washington Nationals and the Houston Astros Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

trots didn't have a center-fielder. Astros' Justin Dirden

bounded out of the dugout and raced to centerfield.

"Tomorrow I got to get out there and do it all over again," Pawol said. "That's my next job. Anybody in baseball will tell you to keep it simple and work hard, put your all into it and get ready for the next day." MLB's move comes 27 years after the gender barrier for game officials was broken in the NBA, nine years after it ended the NFL and two years after the men's soccer World Cup employed a female referee.

"This is a viable career becoming a professional umpire — men and women, girls and boys," she said. "I didn't know that the first several years when I got into umpiring in amateur ball for 10 years." □



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Calamari or the mouthwatering creamy Garlic Tarragon Shrimp. You can also opt for a classic French Onion Soup, a Lobster Bisque or the famously Water's Edge House Wedge, a crisp wedge of fresh romaine lettuce topped with homemade blue cheese dressing, diced tomatoes, chopped bacon, caramelized pecans and blue cheese crumbles, drizzled with balsamic reduction. This followed by the Chef's special of seafood such as Fresh salmon filet seasoned and grilled, topped with lemon cilantro butter and served with homemade mashed potatoes and fresh asparagus, a nice plate of Ahi Tuna or a succulent pasta dish like the Florentina Fettuccine Alfredo. Meat Lovers will have their fix with choices of a devourable 22oz. Bone-In "Tomahawk" Rib-Eye, pan seared in garlic infused oil and finished in the oven or our juicy N.Y Strip Loin, seasoned & grilled. All our steaks options are seasoned with a blend of kosher salt and freshly cracked black pepper. Served with homemade mashed potatoes, seasoned vegetables and a choice of red wine reduction, green peppercorn demi glace, mushroom sauce, or bacon blue cheese butter. For extra sides the options are delectable. Fresh asparagus, seasonal vegetables, mashed or baked potatoes, fries or rice and beans. Combine your personal choice with one of the most exclusive wine from the great selection of international wines to compliment your dish. Kids will enjoy every item of the specially compiled kids menu and there are also optional dishes for all vegans, vegetarians and gluten-free guests. To end the culinary voyage with some luscious sweetness, the desserts are wild. From a piece of coconut flan, NY cheese cake, carrot cake, chocolate brownie or our classic Tiramisu with kahlua and amaretto served with choco-



late sauce and coffee jelly. Not to mention the fresh and light piece of key lime pie.

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### Thank you to all our guests

From the bottom of our hearts, we would like to Thank all of our guests who showed us so much love and support all throughout the year, and hopefully will continue to do so in the years to come. What we are most grateful for is that we could get back to doing what we love, which is looking after our guests. So, thank you for every dinner, lunch, breakfast, every to-go order, every glass of wine, every birthday, anniversary and date-night that you spent with us this last year. To our new guests, Welcome! We hope you to see you back soon! ☐



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